

National Career Academy Coalition SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR CAREER ACADEMIES

*Based on the National Standards of Practice
Adopted December 1, 2004*



Purpose: To assess how well the career academy model is being implemented. This self-assessment tool is intended as an analysis to provide the most thorough and accurate picture of the academy. You may use the sample documentation provided to meet each component of the National Standards or you may use any other suitable documentation.

Overall career academy ratings:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Model Academy: | Exceeds the criteria for the standards and can be nationally replicated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Academy: | Meets the criteria for the standards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress Academy: | Meets the criteria for some of the standards and, with work can move to the certified level |





The National Standards of Practice for Career Academies were developed through the joint efforts of the following organizations:

- Career Academy Support Network (CASN)
- National Academy Foundation (NAF)
- National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC)
- National Center for Education and the Economy/America's Choice (NCEE)
- Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)
 - High Schools That Work (HSTW)
- Talent Development High Schools
 - Center for Research on Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR)

For Additional Information Contact:
National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC)
c/o PHMC
260 S. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(267) 765-2309
www.ncacinc.org



I. Defined Mission & Goals

The career academy has a written definition of its mission and goals. These are available to the administrators, teachers, students, parents, advisory board, and others involved in the academy.

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<i>a. To focus on college and career</i>	
A career academy's aim is to prepare students for college <i>and</i> careers. Academies enable students to complete college entrance academic requirements while exposing them to a vertical segment of the occupations within a career field, encouraging them to aim as high as they wish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Copies of the current mission statement and academy goals ◇ Benchmarks or measurements connected to the goals ◇ Evidence of ways in which the academy mission and goals are implemented ◇ Class assignments are presented that provide a means of exposure to career themes ◇ Publications including school newsletters, local newspapers, brochures, highlighting career academy mission and activities

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<i>b. To raise student aspirations and commitment</i>	
Academy seeks to increase the level of students' motivation while in high school with special emphasis on encouraging students to set their sights <i>high</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ All academy academic classes are college-preparatory classes ◇ Integrated curriculum units are available that demonstrate emphasis on mastery of content ◇ Student assessment and attendance data ◇ Students have opportunities to be mentored by post-secondary, community, and/or industry partners ◇ Evidence of guidance and personal development ◇ Evidence of student leadership development ◇ Evidence of student participation in extra curricular activities and/or clubs

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<i>c. To increase student achievement</i>	
Academy provides support to its students to increase their achievement in high school by developing close relationships with teachers and fellow students, by mastering rigorous and relevant curriculum, and by being exposed to career and educational options outside the high school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Learning for all academy students is personalized and takes into account learning styles/multiple intelligences ◇ Integrated curriculum units are available that demonstrate emphasis on mastery of content ◇ Portfolios of student accomplishments ◇ Guest speakers, field experiences, service learning projects, mentoring, job-shadowing, internships or On-the-Job assignments ◇ Academic support classes ◇ Remediation and/or credit recovery



II. Academy Structure

An academy needs to have a well defined structure within the high school, reflecting its status as a small learning community.

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<i>a. Cross-grade articulation</i>	
The academy incorporates at least two grade levels, ending in the senior year, with strong articulation in its teacher team, curriculum, and instruction across grade levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ An academy pamphlet ◇ The Master Schedule ◇ Integrated curriculum across academy classes and/or grade levels reflecting integration of academic and theme classes ◇ Curriculum mapping

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<i>b. Student selection</i>	
Entry into the academy is voluntary with a written and widely available recruitment/selection process, orientation for new students, parent participation, and academy enrollment reflecting the general high school population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ School/student data that flags or cross references students ◇ Evidence of student selection and recruitment process ◇ Academy orientation student and parent materials

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<i>c. Cohort scheduling</i>	
Academy classes are limited to academy students who take a series of classes together each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Academy teachers and class lists are cross referenced with the list of identified academy students

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<i>d. Physical space</i>	
Academy classrooms are near each other in the high school building and the academy coordinator has access to communication outside the high school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Blueprints/map of the school with academy classes marked ◇ A written statement by the academy coordinator/lead teacher describes the communication methods for the academy team

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<i>e. Small size, supportive atmosphere</i>	
The academy maintains personalization through limited size, teacher teamwork, and a supportive atmosphere.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ A roster of academy students and academy staff ◇ Documentation of a supportive atmosphere is maintained in the academy ◇ Rationale for the academy size



III. Host District and High School

Career academies exist in a district and high school context. These contexts are important determinants of an academy's success.

Criteria		Sample Documentation
<i>a. Support from the Board of Education and Superintendent</i>		
	The district Board of Education is aware of the academy and its mission and goals, and is on public record in support. Likewise the superintendent publicly endorses the academy and offers active support. Both serve as academy liaisons to the broader community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Board minutes approving the academy, along with any other presentation about the academy ◇ Written proof of the superintendent's support ◇ Public endorsement, either in letters, newspaper articles, TV clips, etc. ◇ Evidence that the academy is a component of broader district high school reform

Criteria		Sample Documentation
<i>b. Support from the principal and high school administration</i>		
	The high school principal and other administrators are knowledgeable about the academy, publicly advocate for it, and are actively involved in its funding, staffing and support. They ensure the academy has a high profile in the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Evidence of how the principal and other school administrators support the academy. (ex. written materials, presentations, letters, posters, banners, etc.)

Criteria		Sample Documentation
<i>c. Adequate funding, facilities, equipment, and materials</i>		
	District and high school administrative support results in adequate academy funding, facilities, equipment, and learning materials. These reflect a serious commitment from the district and high school to the success of the academy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ A list of funding amounts and sources ◇ An inventory of academy facilities, equipment, and learning materials



IV. Faculty & Staff

Appropriate teacher selection, leadership, credentialing, and cooperation are critical to an academy's success.

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<p><i>a. Teacher Leader(s)/Coordinator(s)</i></p> <p>One teacher (sometimes two) agrees to take the lead, serving as the academy coordinator(s)/lead teacher(s). This includes attending advisory board meetings, interacting with administrators and board members, managing the budget, helping to coordinate teacher professional development, and helping to coordinate employer, higher education, and parental involvement. Release time is provided for this role.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Name(s) of the academy coordinator(s)/lead teacher(s) ◇ Documentation how academy coordinator(s)/lead teacher(s) provide guidance through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advisory board meeting agendas and/or minutes ○ Agendas and/or minutes of interactions with administrators or board members ○ Copies of the budget matrix ○ List of professional development opportunities provided along with list of participants ○ Employer involvement via membership on the academy advisory council ○ Post-secondary education involvement via membership on the academy advisory council and/or articulation agreements ○ Parental involvement via membership on the academy advisory council ◇ The school's master schedule shows release time for this person(s) and/or proof of compensation for leadership role exists

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<p><i>b. Teachers are credentialed in their field, volunteer in the academy, and are committed to its mission and goals</i></p> <p>Since a career academy's success rests on good teaching and good teamwork among a cross disciplinary group of teachers, they must be well qualified and willingly involved in this role. They understand and support the philosophy and purpose of the academy, and cooperatively share the duties of operating an academy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ A roster and credentials of the academy team of teachers ◇ Master school schedule ◇ A description by each academy staff member discussing the teamwork of the staff, his or her involvement in the academy, the philosophy and purpose of the academy, and his or her specific duties

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<p><i>c. Counselors, non-academy teachers, and certificated staff are supportive</i></p> <p>Non-academy staff is also important to its operation. Counselors understand the need for cohort scheduling and provide this for academy students. Non-academy teachers understand the value of the academy and help in recruiting students for it and providing departmental support. Classified staff helps support the academy facilities, equipment, and learning materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ List of non-academy staff and their academy role ◇ A written description of how classified staff help ◇ Evidence of counselor and data processor/scheduler support for the academy ◇ Written reports or minutes of counselor contact with academy staff and students ◇ Names of counselors and student participants



V. Professional Development

Since an academy places teachers and other adults into roles not normally included in their previous training, providing adequate professional development time, leadership, and support is critical.

Criteria <i>a. Common planning time</i>	Sample Documentation
Academy teachers are provided common planning time within the regular high school schedule for purposes of program coordination, curricular integration, and resolution of student problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ A review of the Master Schedule shows that all teachers identified as being part of the academy team have common planning time. These meetings can occur before, during or after the school day, or during scheduled staff development time

Criteria <i>b. Teacher professional development</i>	Sample Documentation
Academy teachers are provided with training in the academy structure, curricular integration, student support and employer involvement.	Professional development as evidenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Sign-in sheets ◇ Agendas, reports, etc. ◇ College transcripts ◇ Proof of immersion into learning about the academy theme through shadowing or externship ◇ Proof of participation in professional learning communities or other mechanisms the district or school may have for ongoing professional dialogue

Criteria <i>c. Employer & parent orientation</i>	Sample Documentation
Employer volunteers are adequately prepared for their roles as speakers, field trip hosts, mentors, and internship supervisors. Parents are adequately prepared for their involvement (if any) as classroom aides, field trip chaperones, and social event organizers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Orientation or handbook for employer volunteers ◇ Orientation or handbook for parental volunteers ◇ A list of employer volunteers, their duties, and documentation demonstrating their volunteer activities ◇ A list of parents, their volunteer roles, and documentation demonstrating their volunteer activities



VI. Governance & Leadership

The academy has a governing structure that incorporates the views of all stakeholders.

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<i>a. Advisory board with broad representation</i>	
The advisory board has members from the district, high school administration, academy teaching staff, supporting employers, and institutions of higher education. It may also include community representatives and academy parents and students. The board incorporates viewpoints from all its members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ The advisory board/steering committee membership list is available and identifies at least one member from each of the following groups: district administration, high school administration, academy teacher, employers, post secondary education, parent, and student ◇ By-laws identify board composition

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<i>b. Regular meetings</i>	
Meetings of the advisory board are held at least quarterly, with defined agendas and outcomes. The board helps to set policies for the academy. It also serves as a center of resource development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Advisory committee meeting minutes, agendas and sign-in sheets ◇ Evidence of a budget, resource development and policies

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<i>c. A healthy partnership</i>	
Both through the advisory board and other interactions there is evidence of a partnership between the academy/high school and its host community.	<p>There is documentation that demonstrates interaction between the advisory board and the academy as evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Board member participation in academy activities ◇ Academy students participation in corporate sponsored events ◇ Creative solutions to issues

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<i>d. A student voice</i>	
Students have avenues through which they can provide input to the academy policies and practices.	<p>There is documentation that demonstrates student input into academy policies and practices as evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Advisory board member list ◇ Advisory board minutes ◇ Creative solutions to issues



VII. Curriculum & Instruction

The curriculum and instruction within an academy meet external standards and college entrance requirements, while differing from a regular high school by focusing learning around a theme.

Criteria <i>a. Meets external standards</i>	Sample Documentation
The academic curriculum is framed around state or national standards and the career curriculum around industry and SCANS standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ U.S. Department of Education (DOE) or state standards are integrated into the curriculum ◇ National (and local) industry standards are evident in the lesson plans/integrated units created by academy teachers ◇ Students have the opportunity to earn a vocational/technical <i>Certificate of Mastery</i> (if one is available) ◇ A curriculum framework connected to post-secondary requirements

Criteria <i>b. Meets college entrance requirements</i>	Sample Documentation
Coursework reaches high levels of English and math, generally four years of each, in addition to substantial coursework in science and social studies. Graduates are qualified to attend four-year colleges/universities and encouraged to do so.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ A rigorous Program of Study is defined and is published in academy marketing materials outlining in detail the courses available ◇ A list of students completing dual enrollment, advanced placement, International Baccalaureate, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) or articulations ◇ Documentation shows that graduates qualify for college ◇ Information that demonstrates students are encouraged to attend post-secondary options

Criteria <i>c. Curriculum is sequenced, integrated, rigorous, and relevant</i>	Sample Documentation
Curriculum articulates from the beginning of an academy through the senior year, with a defined course sequence and at least two core academic classes and one career/theme class each year. Curriculum is integrated among the academic classes and between these and the career class. Learning illustrates applications of academic subjects outside the classroom, incorporates current technology, and includes authentic project based learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Academy courses and the course sequence ◇ Classroom lessons/units emphasize English and math literacy ◇ Lessons/units are available for review and they reflect integration between academic classes and career/theme classes ◇ Evidence of the use of technology in project-based learning ◇ Evidence of students taking more rigorous courses



Criteria <i>d. Post-graduate planning</i>		Sample Documentation
	Students have access to career and college information, are provided counseling in these respects, and develop a written post-graduate plan by the end of their sophomore year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ The post-secondary application process is clearly defined ◇ Evidence is presented indicating the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Classroom presentations by post-secondary speakers (letter, photos, etc.) ○ Field trips to local post-secondary sites ○ Printouts from career assessment computer program or classroom assignments indicating research of local and national post-secondary institutions ○ Financial aid presentation and workshops (class schedules, memos, flyers, and sign-in sheets)

Criteria <i>e. Dual credit options</i>		Sample Documentation
	The academy has articulation agreements with local two- and four-year colleges, offers dual credit courses for upper classmen, and articulates its upper level curriculum with relevant college programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Evidence of dual credit, articulation agreements, advanced placement courses and other specialized post-secondary enrollments (ex. curriculum handbook, copies of agreements) ◇ Students and parents awareness of the application process (ex. flyers, agendas for parent information sessions) ◇ Copies of scholarship information disseminated



VIII. Employer, Higher Education, & Community Involvement

A career academy links high school to its host community and involves members of the employer, higher education and civic community in certain aspects of its operation.

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<i>a. Career theme fits the local economy</i>	
The academy career field is selected to fit with the community industries and employer base to allow for adequate involvement of volunteer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Evidence that the academy career field was selected to fit with the community industries and employer base and supports local economic and workforce development ◇ Evidence that the community has enough employees in this field for adequate involvement in the academy

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<i>b. Community involvement</i>	
Representatives of employers, higher education, and the community help to guide the academy's curriculum, and provide speakers, field trip sites, job shadowing opportunities, mentors, student internships, community service opportunities, college tours, and teacher externships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ A list of employers, post-secondary education staff, and the community with categories that show how they guide the academy curriculum such as speakers, field trip sites, job shadowing opportunities, mentors, student internships, community service opportunities, college tours and teacher externships

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<i>c. Incorporates citizenship</i>	
The academy fosters a culture of respect for others and encourages student contributions as citizens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Evidence of academy students participation in a variety of community service projects ◇ Classroom presentations by community civic groups on citizenship and employability skills, expectations and rules ◇ Academy membership fosters respect for diversity ◇ Leadership training in classroom or through student organizations

Criteria	Sample Documentation
<i>d. Work-/community-based learning</i>	
The academy offers work and/or community based learning opportunities for all interested students, following their junior year, either through paid internships or community service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Evidence of work-based learning such as shadowing, internships, On the Job training, service learning



IX. Student Assessment

Improvements in student performance are central to an academy's mission. It is important to gather data that reflect whether students are showing improvement and to report these accurately and fairly to maintain the academy's integrity.

Criteria <i>a. Student data are collected</i>	Sample Documentation
These data include those necessary to describe the student body within the academy (e.g., grade level, gender, race/ethnicity) and its relationship to the high school in general, as well as student performance on a variety of outcome measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ There is evidence that data has been collected for the academy and has been compared to the same data for the high school in general in areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grade level ○ Gender ○ Race/ethnicity ○ Free & reduced lunch ○ Exceptional Student Education (ESE) ○ English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Criteria <i>b. Multiple academic measures are included...AND d. Accurate reporting</i>	Sample Documentation
Outcome measures include a variety of accepted indicators of performance (e.g., attendance, retention, credits, grade point averages, state test scores, graduation rates, college going rates).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ There is evidence that the follow indicators of performance are included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attendance ○ Retention ○ Credits ○ GPAs ○ Graduation rates ○ College going rates ○ State test scores ○ National test scores (ex. NAEP, SAT, ACT, CPT) ◇ There is evidence that students are taking more rigorous courses ◇ There is evidence of a graduating class

Criteria <i>c. Technical learning is assessed</i>	Sample Documentation
Measures include knowledge of the field's terminology, technical concepts, and ability to apply English, math and other academic skills to authentic real world projects. Where appropriate, industry certification is incorporated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ There is evidence that technical learning is assessed and students show mastery of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Terminology and technical concepts ○ Application of knowledge of the field to real world problems and projects ○ Skills necessary to attain industry certification where appropriate ◇ There is evidence that data is being used for instruction

Criteria <i>e. Evidence of impact</i>	Sample Documentation
These measures show whether, and how much, the academy improves student performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Analysis of the data indicates whether there is improved academy student performance when compared with the entire high school student body



X. Cycle of Improvement

No new academy functions perfectly. Even well established and operated academies benefit from self examination and refinement. Ensuring and improving the quality of a career academy requires engaging in a regular cycle of improvement.

Criteria		Sample Documentation
<i>a. Academy implementation is examined</i>		
	Program leaders regularly assess the academy's functioning, studying its strengths and weaknesses. This involves gathering feedback from key stakeholders, including students.	◇ Input from all stakeholders, including students, is gathered each year by means of a survey, questionnaire, an interview, or third party evaluator

Criteria		Sample Documentation
<i>b. Academy refinements are planned</i>		
	These reviews lead to plans to address any problems. Such plans include timetables and benchmarks for improvement.	◇ A team is organized to analyze the evaluation results within the mission of the academy, determine where improvements or changes are needed and create an implementation plan ◇ A timetable and benchmarks for improvement are created with a list of who is responsible for each of the benchmarks

Criteria		Sample Documentation
<i>c. Changes reflect the academy's mission and goals</i>		
	The refinements refer back to the academy's underlying mission and goals.	◇ Academy teams make the necessary improvements and/or changes ◇ Academy teams revisit their mission and goals and refine them as needed ◇ Forward thinking plans for academy sustainability are designed, especially if an academy has received federal, state or designated monies to begin operation

